



United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

***Organizational Development and Performance Improvement
Support – Phase III***

Organizational Health and Culture Assessment (OHCA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

May 2020





OHCA Lab/Office-Specific Report FAQs

When and how will each Lab/Office receive their individual report?

AvantGarde (AG) is developing the Lab/Office-specific reports and will begin sending them to Lab and Office Directors in May. The reports will be rolled out to each Lab/Office Director as they are developed, based on sequencing determined in consultation with OAR Leadership. After the Director has received their report, they will have the opportunity to meet with the AG Team to review their organization's OHCA findings and recommendations. As a result of this meeting, the Director/Deputy Director will discuss the OHCA results with their workforce and identify courses of action to implement the recommendations.

How will the reports be shared with the Lab/Office workforce?

The Lab/Office-specific reports will be shared with the workforce at the discretion of Lab/Office Leadership. The reports will be provided in PowerPoint format to help encourage and simplify sharing with the workforce. During the Director discussions, the AG Team will also provide guidance on how best to disseminate the information.

What will be included in the Lab/Office-specific reports?

Each report will include:

- An executive summary including overall Lab/Office OHCA participation information
- Specific, Lab/Office-tailored recommendations for ways to build on the Lab/Office's strengths and address opportunities for improvement
- Findings from the quantitative and qualitative survey and focus group data for each dimension of organizational health included in the OHCA
- Detailed analysis of OHCA survey questions broken out by employee-type when possible (if a survey question received fewer than ten responses from one or more employee types, the responses will be aggregated as necessary to protect confidentiality)
- Comparisons of Lab/Office scores to the cumulative "All Labs" or "All Offices" scores and the "OAR Enterprise" scores
- Insights within the dimensions by leader, manager, employee, CI, and/or contractor (if data is available while satisfying confidentiality requirements)

How will the process differ for Labs/Offices that had 10 or fewer OHCA participants?

Labs/Offices with 10 or fewer OHCA participants will receive a report, however, OHCA findings, recommendations, and survey analyses will be aggregated with similar Lab/Offices to protect participant confidentiality. Each Lab/Office Director and Deputy Director will have their own meetings with the AG Team to discuss the report findings, recommendations, and next steps.

Questions from the May 5th All-Hands Meeting

What steps has OAR Leadership already taken to address the OHCA Enterprise-wide recommendations?

Since the OHCA took place in 2019, some of the recommendations put forth by the AG Team are being, or have already been, addressed by OAR. Examples include communicating the OAR Strategy and re-organization, developing an OAR Leadership Program, addressing taskers/data requests, and investigating



hiring barriers. In the coming months, OAR employees will hear more about the progress as OAR Leadership prioritizes and focuses on these recommendations.

Were the large-scale federal hiring freezes considered in the hiring recommendations?

At the time of the assessment, the federal hiring freezes had already been lifted and FTEs were available to fill across OAR and the individual work units. While the issue of the hiring freeze came up as a significant deterrent and roadblock to hiring in the key informant interviews and focus groups, most of the discussion was around the hiring process itself. However, there was significant concern that federal hiring freezes would be enacted in the future and further diminish OAR's ability to bring people on board, create succession, and increase diversity within the organization.

What level of tension between research to operations and basic science is typically acceptable for a science-based organization such as OAR?

Dynamic tension between basic science and research-to-operations creates better decisions around the priorities of the research and science done by OAR and will never really go away. The level of dynamic tension can intensify depending on where one is in the life cycle of the science/research being done. What the AG Team findings highlight is that the dynamic tension is not being discussed enough either peer-to-peer, at the Lab/Office-level, or between OAR Leadership and the Labs/Offices. Therefore, the lack of communication and consistent messaging regarding this tension creates confusion, ambiguity, and some "us versus them" mentality in the organization. The tension will not go away because exploration on the front lines of science will not always fit current applications, however it needs to be appropriately discussed and the workforce needs to understand how it influences OAR's priorities.

Can AG further explain the need to stress diversity as a business imperative?

Public, private, and non-profit sector organizations that embrace diversity see it as fundamental to performance, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, decision-making, and performance. Building the talent pipeline and fostering inclusion for racial, ethnic, gender, and LGBTQ groups is critical to achieving these benefits. The AG Team is aware of the performance impact on agencies that embrace diversity, in the demographics of their workforces and in achieving their missions. When the AG Team talks about diversity as a mission/business imperative, they are talking about the real impact on performance and the ability of the organization to do its job effectively, not solely as an initiative or project that sits aside the regular operations of the organization.

Given the importance of diversity to the operation of OAR, how can the term be interpreted? How does inclusion factor into diversity?

In the OHCA Survey, diversity and inclusion were their own separate dimensions however, diversity and inclusion were grouped together in the recommendations. For diversity to be truly acted on, it needs to be done in an inclusive environment. People in the organization need to have equal standing and their insights and opinions need to be valued, regardless of if/how they differ from others. Those things are then integrated into how decisions are made, problems are solved, and how people are valued within the organization. As the perspective of diverse employees are addressed, inclusion must be factored in when considering how OAR can perform at even greater levels by increasing diversity within the organization.